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TENTH CONSULTATION ON EAST TIMOR SOLIDARITY GROUPS, LONDON, MARCH 10-11 1990

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Report of the

Tenth Consultative Meeting of East Timor Solidarity Groups

London, 10 - 11 March 1990

The situation inside East Timor: Reorganisation of the resistance and consequences for the National Convergence abroad

The discussion was introduced by Paulo Pires (UDT) and Abilio Araujo (Fretilin).

Paulo Pires said the National Convergence (NC) of two parties which were enemies in 1974 was created in March 1986 to strengthen the fight against Indonesia. Inside E Timor, the convergence was between the armed resistance (under Xanana), the church, the ordinary people, the forces of resistance within the Indonesian administration and the student underground. It was especially important that Bishop Belo, as head of the church, was now speaking up for self-determination. Xanana is now a non-party leader, having left Fretilin, while Falintil had become a national army. The NC has rejected proposals that E Timor should have autonomy status; in any case, Indonesia, a unitary state, does not recognise such a status.

Abilio Araujo said the Fretilin external leadership had held a 3-week long meeting. The final document is not yet available in translation but will be circulated to solidarity groups. The national movement has been strengthened by the policy of national unity since the 1981 congress. In 1981, Xanana and Mau Hunu reorganised Fretilin following three years when the resistance was disorganised and the Falintil in disarray. The congress established a Marxist-Leninist party.

1982 and 1983 were years of national unity with Fretilin functioning as a party. It was called a front though 'front' was a policy without any structure. The church under Mgr Costa Lopes knew that Fretilin had become an ML party. In 1982/83, the church acted as intermediary for dialogue between the resistance and the Indonesians. There were two factions in Fretilin, the faction of Mauk Muruk against the faction of Xanana. Mauk Muruk who opposed dialogue defected along with the general staff of the army, Kik who later committed suicide. They opposed talks because they felt Fretilin organisation was not yet strong enough, making it possible for Indonesia to destroy the underground.

The dialogue of March 1983 was positive by making the resistance better known worldwide and to people in the occupied areas. Exchange of information between people in the mountains and in the occupied areas also improved. But there were negative effects; defections, the contradictions inside Fretilin and also the dismantling of the underground. When the ceasefire broke down in August 1983, many people in the underground were arrested; some were tried and some are still in prison.

The church became increasingly conscious of Indonesian atrocities and sympathetic to the resistance, though not necessarily supporting its policy. In 1984, Fretilin CC held a second congress which decided to transform the party into a front; Marxism was abandoned and the party restored its structure as a front as in 1974 and 1975. The leadership launched a policy of national unity. One document prepared at this time by Xanana was the 14 questions and answers about national unity. There was an exchange of information between the interior and the exterior on how to achieve national unity. Even when Fretilin was a Marxist-Leninist party, support for it did not diminish, nor was its tie with the church affected; the church continued to act as a conduit for information from the resistance to the outside world. There was unity around the need to fight the Indonesian occupation.

Xanana tried two strategies to strengthen unity. The first was to invite everyone to enter Fretilin, making it a broad front. But as it became clear this would not work, it started to build a platform of understanding between Fretilin and the national parties. The fact that people felt themselves to be either Fretilin or UDT could not be ignored. The Convergence developed out of this second strategy.

The Convergence created a new situation. Falintil had always been Fretilin's army. But already in 1983, at the time of the talks with Indonesia, Fretilin had started talking about a multi-party system. Many things had to change. Falintil could not continue as

the army of one party, under Fretilin command. On 7 December 1987, Xanana made an important statement containing self-criticism about Fretilin, of which he was still a member. He criticised the leftist Marxist line that had dominated Fretilin for many years. He then launched 'R.E.R.', the 'structural readjustment of the resistance', in response to the new situation. Until then, the Fretilin CC had led the struggle within the CRRN, the Revolutionary Council of the National Resistance, which was composed of the Fretilin CC and the army general staff. The Fretilin external delegation, the DFSE, was the external wing of the CRRN.

In the readjustment, the CRRN was replaced by the CNRM, the National Council of Maubere Resistance, composed of two distinct but inter-related bodies, one inside and one outside. Inside is the Falintil command and the internal structure of the CNRM; externally is the Delegation of the Resistance Working Oustide, DRSE with a three-man, collective leadership -Mgr Lopes, Dr do Amaral and Abilio Araujo. Xanana left Fretilin to become commander of Falintil and leader of the resistance, while Falintil became a non-party, national army. Mgr Lopes did not join the leadership as the Catholic church does not allow priests to occupy political positions.

In June 1989, Fretilin, including Ramos Horta, held a meeting to discuss the RER. There were certain difficulties in creating the DRSE structure. Without Mgr Lopes, the DRSE was the same as the Convergence, which is still a policy, not yet an organisation with a structure. Representation abroad is still by Fretilin, in Angola and elsewhere. Tese problems were raised with Xanana who replied on 11 November 1989; he spoke about the changes these developments had brought in the resistance in East Timor. He spoke of the Convergence as the representative of the people of E Timor. He reiterated this in a letter on 31 March when he talked about Fretilin and UDT as representatives of the people of E Timor.

Fretilin confronted some problems, especially the departure of Horta from Fretilin, for personal and political reasons. Abilio did npt go into detail about this. , saying the enemy is Indonesia and all Timorese who work against Indonesia should be supported. The reasons Horta gave for leaving Fretilin were that there is no democracy and that Abilio behaved like a dictator. Regarding his demand for elections outside, the problem cannot be resolved like this because of the statutes of the external committee.For 14 years, it has been a delegation of the CC, subordinated to the leadership in E Timor. It can make proposals about diplomatic strategy but not about composition. The members are on the CC, having been elected at a congress in the interior, the most recent being in 1981 and 1984. It is not against elections but must consult the leadership. It cannot independently decide to hold elections though any Fretilin member can make proposals to the organisation. There was to have been a congress inside in October but it was postponed.

Since Horta's resignation, Jose Luis Guterres represents the external committee in New York and Mari Alkatiri is in charge of external relations. There is a Central Council of the External Delegation which consists of all CC members outside and representatives from groups in various places. Alfredo Fereira in Australia is a member of the Central Council. Preparations are being made for a plenary of the External Delegation attended by members of Fretilin committees in various parts of Australia and elsewhere. The structure consists of a Central Council, a Plenary and a Chief, the leadership consisting of Abilio and Alkatiri.

Both Fretilin and UDT should strengthen themselves, especially in preparation for when a peace plan is adopted. When elections are held in E Timor, parties will campaign-. With Falintil as a national army, the resistance consists not only of the armed struggle but also of the underground, the mass struggle, which is now very important. The recent demonstrations in E Timor have been organised; they are not just simply spontaneous. Fretilin will have to contest elections and will need an organisation for this. Under the Peace Plan, the period when Falintil is in the mountains will be when the political organisations will have a special role to play.

Discussion

In a question and answer session, the following points emerged:

- Now that Xanana is not in a party, he communicates with the exterior as head of the resistance and of the army. He contacts the leaders of Fretilin and UDT as commander of Falintil.

- There have been problems for several years with information intended for the DFSE. Documents are often copied and sent through several channels; some come faster than others. As a result, documents addressed to Abilio often reach other destinations before he gets the document.

- Abilio denied that many actions in the occupied areas are spontaneous and not under Fretilin leadership. He did not agreed with the opinion that, as with *intifada* in the Occupied Areas where PLO is no longer in control, the militants in Dili are not under Fretilin leadership. Many taking action had been prisoners in Atauro or their sons and daughters; others had been in various prisons. The majority are from Fretilin but no-one talks about parties, only about being part of the resistance.

- Contacts were under way to work out Fretilin's own programme and leadership. It is not for Xanana as the national leader to decide who represents Fretilin or UDT outside. When he set up the DRSE, he proposed that it be composed of the leaders of Fretilin and UDT. When Moises do Amaral died, Paulo Pires took over for the UDT. The two Fretilin members who are political advisors in the command of Falintil, Mau Hodu Ram Kadala and Mau Hunu are members of Fretilin CC. Also Fretilin CC members in the occupied areas correspond with the External Fretilin leadership. Falintil includes people who are not of any party. Fretilin members in the army serve as citizens.

- Re Fretilin's statutes, Abilio explained that the majority of the 67 members of the Fretilin CC in 1977 were killed. After 1979, only 2 CC members were left inside with seven outside. Decisions at Fretilin congresses are taken inside, not by members outside. Mau Hunu and Xanana formed the political committee in place of the destroyed CC. They elected the leadership, including those outside. Now we are trying to adapt to the new situation. The statutes which lay down how the external representatives are chosen must be adhered to outside; they can't be changed.

- Regarding UDT, Paulo Pires said some UDT central committee members were killed in 1975/76. The two remaining inside, Mario Carrascalao and Lopes da Cruz, are working for the Indonesian administration, so UDT legitimacy rests with its leadership outside. There are UDT members in the armed struggle and UDT sees Xanana as a highly-respected national leader.

- Re the political ideology of UDT and Fretilin, Abilio and Paulo said they were both anti-colonial and nationalist, with some socialist and Christian leanings. With the recent changes, there is little to differentiate between ideologies; at future elections, they will campaign on their record during the resistance and their competence to govern.

- Regarding views that student activists were likely to take independent initiatives and should have the choice of who to work with, Abilio reiterated that all actions are coordinated.

- Yvette (Dutch Komite) said it is essential for solidarity groups to accept the Convergence as sole representative of the E Timorese people. Robert (CIIR) felt we need to understand how Fretilin and UDT are accountable to their party membership. Abilio felt that doubt is being cast on the Convergence's representativeness; it was officially recognised by the Portuguese Government on 17 February 1990. He expressed concern at the trend of the discussion and feared that the relationship between the Convergence and the solidarity groups might be in question. Paulo also emphasised that the solidarity movement should support the Convergence.

- Antonio Dias (Agir Pour Timor) said Xanana's 1987 statement and subsequent documents showed that the internal resistance encompasses many political positions. When Falintil was separated from Fretilin, many groups had to adjust to a new situation which resulted in an outburst of spontaneous actions. Clearly, things have changed but saying this this did not cast doubt on Convergence legitimacy. What was Fretilin's opinion of Xanana's criticism of its past record, particularly its leftist orientation which he now describes as 'adventurist'? We also need an assessment of the present position

of the resistance movement. Luisa Pereira (CDPM) thought the Convergence should give assessments of information received from the interior, coming as it does from various sources, to help solidarity movement work out priorities.

- Abilio said some of Xanana's criticisms are not acceptable, for instance his argument that Indonesia's invasion was based on the fear of communism, based on Fretilin's leftist political stance. Perhaps Xanana is unaware that Fretilin was publicly in favour of E Timor joining ASEAN and had proposed joint border patrols along the border with W Timor.

E Timor and the impact of changes in Eastern Europe

Luisa (CDPM) said the global changes meant the solidarity movement should expand contacts with liberation movements in the South, such as the ANC and PLO, and with newly-independent Namibia. Emphasis should be placed on Suharto as the world's longest-surviving dictator. In the spirit of the times, we must give greater prominence to the pro-democracy movt in Indonesia. Current changes could also force Indonesia to soften repression in E Timor, giving more space to the resistance and city protest.

Regarding Portugal, it now seems fairly certain the parliamentary mission will visit E Timor in August this year; all parties will be included. The agreed terms for the visit are not yet clear but there will be ten journalists, five proposed by Portugal, five by Indonesia. Abilio added that some non-negotiable Portuguese conditions have apparently been met, eg. that the parliamentarians will not need Indonesian visas; they will travel by Portuguese plane, making a brief stopover in Jakarta. They will be greeted by Indonesian parliamentarians at the airport only, to respect Portugal's insistence that the mission does not visit Indonesia.

Parliamentarians for East Timor (PET)

Carmel Budiardjo reported that about 200 MPs from ten countries are now members. Members should be recruited from more countries such as France, Austria and Denmark, where solidarity groups operate. The major weakness is getting individual members to respond to specific campaign actions initiated in London; the best responses have come from Canadian members. In Japan, there are many members but little initiative or response. By contrast, Petra Kelly (Greens) in Germany had submitted a long list of questions regarding E Timor to the Foreign Ministry.

PET is concentrating efforts at present on (i) the Timor Gap Treaty and (ii) sending a parliamentary mission to New York to press Peres de Cuellar on more action from the UN in favour of E Timor's independence. It is currently seeking the opinion of lawyers on the legality of the Timor Gap Treaty; the treaty will come up for ratification after the new Australian Parliament is formed.

Matsumo (Japan E Timor Coalition) explained the political constraints on MPs speaking out about issues they support. MPs rely heavily on financial and other support from companies who could withdraw support from MPs who upset Indonesia, a country with which they conduct business. (It is estimated that each MP needs about £1.5 million to run her/his election campaign.)

Timor Gap Treaty

Although Portugal has threatened action against the Treaty 'at the appropriate international body', it has not yet made a formal application to the International Court of Justice. It is seeking the advice of two Portuguese lawyers. It apparently believes the most appropriate time will be after the Australian Parliament has ratified the Treaty. Groups should obtain their own copies of the Treaty from their own Foreign Ministries and start campaigning against Australian ratification. It was hoped the Convergence would offer its own assessment of the Treaty. The Internatioan Commission of Jurists should be asked to give an opinion on the Treaty.

Demonstration during Ambassador Monjo's visit, January 1990

Andrew McMillan from Darwin reported his observations of the demonstration (much of this published elsewhere). Monjo had a large team with him, including 4 military attaches; three had remained behind to discover what happened after Monjo left the hotel. During the talks between Monjo and the demonstrators, the police appeared to be under restraint but troops were watchful in the background. A document was handed to the ambassador; Abilio promised to provide a copy.

Abilio and others reported that Murdani visited Dili in February and gave an angry talk to some 400 officers and officials, promising to 'wipe out' student actions and to asert firm control during visits by foreign missions. A new security command being referred to as *Merpati Putih* ('white dove') is operating in E Timor. The tape of Murdani's speech has reached a newspaper in Australia; copies are being sought.

UN activity

Decolonisation Committee In this the 15th year of the invasion, a record number of petitioners should be encouraged to attend. Stress on:

- personalities (MPs, academics, politicians, churchpeople) though solidarity groups should also attend as usual;
- greater presence from Pacific countries;
- greater representation from US, and greater balance of MPs (there were five last year from Portugal).

Following Bishop Soma's initiative to muster Pacific church support for Bishop Belo's 6 February 1989 letter, the Bishop of Setubal is planning to collect signatures for a letter of support from church people in Europe. Solidarity groups should support this initiative; the Bishop's draft will be circulated.

TAPOL will inform groups about attending the Decol'n Committee.

UN Human Rights Commission, February 1990 Carmel circulated a report on efforts to have a resolution on E Timor tabled. This proved impossible because of inadequate lobbying among South missions and hesitancy from Portugal. However, the EC, in a joint statement, spoke out on E Timor, along with quite a few western missions. A special difficulty was the lack of Timorese to testify and/or lobby on E Timor's behalf.

It was agreed that lobbying at UN human rights meetings should be better coordinated. This should include:
- efforts by French-speaking groups to lobby African French-speaking countries and by Spanish-speaking groups to lobby South America countries. - it was hoped the Convergence would send lobbyists in future.
- African countries, including Namibia and the ANC should be lobbied.
- if a resolution cannot be tabled at the August 1990 Sub-Commission meeting (because of the Commission's failure to adopt a resolution), there should be more concentration on getting a widely supported Joint Statement of NGOs, to be read out at the session.
- lobbying on E Timor issue should be coordinated with lobbying on Indonesian and W Papuan issues.

The Peace Plan

Xanana has renewed his Peace Plan, slightly modified as compared with the 1983 proposal. Notably, it gives a major role to the Portuguese govt in the five or ten-year transitional period. Paulo said this was more or less the proposal discussed at the Macao talks in 1975 which Fretilin refused to attend. Although the Peace Plan does not mention the referendum, Xanana expressed support in his introductory remarks for the Bishop's call for a referendum. The Convergence has not yet launched the new Peace Plan; it feels the Portuguese govt should come up with its own peace plan.

The Convergence would make a resumee of the Peace Plan document, incorporating the referendum. This would become the Convergence's Peace Plan. For the present it was agreed that the solidarity movement should concentrate on mobilising support for the referendum proposed by Bishop Belo.

Hearing on E Timor at European Parliament

Discussions by the Dutch Komite and X min Y in Brussels have not yet resulted in a firm decision because Parliament's Political Committee's programme is too full and the Human Rights Sub-Committee has already allocated its 1990 hearing in favour of Tibet (it cannot hold two hearings in one year). An alternative approach is for political fractions to sponsor the hearing but this would not materialise during 1990.

Christian Movement for Peace International (which has its office in Brussels) should keep an eye on this plan and hopes to have one person in charge, preferably a Timorese. But this will involve a financial commitment of about £6,000 a year. The CMP should cooperate with the Dutch Komite. A hearing is probably unlikely until some time in 1991.

1990 Plan of Action

A Plan of Activities was presented and adopted. Some points in the Plan are dealt with under separate items of the meeting. Other points are:

- to have events every 6 February, to mark Bishop Belo's 1989 letter to deCuellar for a referendum (this was done in 1990 in Portugal and the UK);
- to hold coordinated protest actions on 7 December 1990, to mark 15th anniversary of the Indonesian invasion;
- to give prominence to UN General Assembly Resolution 43/47 of 22 December 1988 declaring 1990-2000 the 'International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism'. (See copy attached)
- lobbying for E Timor human rights to be raised at this year's IGGI meeting (in The Hague, 12-13 June 1990).

Lobbying governments

The Dutch Komite reported it campaign to lobby Dutch MPs to 'ensure that the Dutch government adopt an active policy to respect the fundamental rights of the E Timorese people, including their right to self-determination and independence'. Individuals and organisations will be approached to sign a petition. Other groups were encouraged to do a similar action.

Artistic event in France

Agir pour Timor is planning an exhibition in 1991, with well-known artists donated paintings and photos which can be sold to raise funds. Artists who campaigned for the release of Otelo, convicted in Portugal on political charges, were being approached for support. Funding will be sought from the Gulberkian Foundation.

Protest against executions in Indonesia

It was agreed to send a message from the meeting to Suharto, protesting at the execution of six longterm political prisoners, 4 in Jakarta and 2 in Medan and to urge the government not to proceed with the execution of six others.

Next meeting

The next Consultation will be held in Lisbon in a year's time.